

**Abstract 469**

**TITLE:** Evaluation of Community Planning in California

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**BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES:** The purpose of this project was to evaluate member satisfaction with the California State Office of AIDS (OA) statewide community group planning process (CPWG), specifically the extent to which prevention planning objectives were met in a way that responded to the needs of the state's affected populations.

**METHODS:** An attitudinal survey was administered by OA in collaboration with the University of California's University-wide AIDS Research Program to all planning group members (n=65) assessing satisfaction with the OA's community planning process and outcomes. Based on CDC guidance, the instrument included statements regarding the planning process itself and the extent to which planning decisions were based on community needs. Members, selected for the CPWG because of their ability to represent affected populations, responded by indicating degrees of agreement.

**RESULTS:** In terms of openness, representation, inclusiveness, and participatory nature of the process, 70% reported that they felt comfortable discussing issues openly, even when there were disagreements; 70% felt that there was an adequate mix of people with and affected by HIV/AIDS; 85% felt that the group adequately reflected the most heavily affected populations; 75% agreed that the OA and group co-chairs made adequate efforts to recruit members who represented affected populations; and 70% reported that OA made it easy for members to participate in the planning process. When asked about the extent to which decision making and the resulting prevention plan were based on needs of affected communities, 80% reported that target populations' priority needs played a significant role; 80% agreed that the state's epi profile influenced the prevention plan; 70% reported that the state's needs assessment was adequately considered; 70% agreed that community norms were influential; and 55% felt that cost effectiveness played a key role. Regarding the influence of public health theory on the decision making process, 55% reported that behavioral science was influential; 55% agreed that health planning was significant; and 60% felt that evaluation considerations played a role. In response to statements concerning linkages between the CPWG prevention plan and allocation of state funding, 80% reported a strong match between the two, an indication of the impact of the planning process on actual funding of targeted prevention programs. Overall, 95% of members reported that they were satisfied with the accomplishments of OA's CPWG planning process.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** In California, the community planning group process is working effectively as a strategy for developing prevention plans that respond to community needs in a way that is inclusive of affected populations.

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